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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted in three technical and vocational training centers in Beijing (China) to determine whether receiving technical or vocational training at training centers made it easier for unemployed girls to have a job. Data were obtained through structured and open interviews and questionnaires; 286 of 350 trainees who were solicited returned questionnaires (148 females and 138 males) for a response rate of 81.7%. Findings indicated that the training centers were developed to meet China's social and economic development needs. Training centers had played an active role in increasing the labor force, and the training they offered helped job seekers find jobs easily in the tight labor market. Unemployed girls gained access to different kinds of training courses. Information from interviews with leaders of training centers and trainees' responses indicated that both male and female trainees could easily find jobs after training at the centers. However, the unemployed girls' participation in the training centers was not satisfactory in terms of quantity and quality. Girls did not enjoy the rate of access to the training that they should, and they tended to cluster in training courses leading to women's traditional jobs, which were characterized by low skill and social prestige. Intake of women in training courses was relatively low compared to their rate of unemployment. This indicated clearly that sex segregation in paid employment had increased and was more obvious than before the economic reforms in China. (YLB)

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Job opportunities and technical and vocational training of unemployed girls in China

Centre for the study of education in developing countries

The Hague, May 1990

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the economic reforms in China, the employment systems have changed drastically. The changes in the employment systems can be directly addressed in the following three areas:

1. The state no longer takes the responsibility for the welfare and job assignments of all workers.
2. Many enterprises have introduced a new system of contracting labour - selecting their employees by means of examinations.
3. The contract responsibility system has introduced competition into employment practice (*Beijing Review* Vol.31. No.51.p.17).

In short the labour market recently has become ever tighter and increasingly competitive in China.

The intensification of economic reforms has endowed enterprises with more right and power to hire and fire workers. In order to overcome inefficiency and tap the true potential of their labour force, many enterprises started by reducing the number of their employees. As a result, the surplus of labour force has become a grave social problem. The reorganization of the labour force has contributed to the surplus of about 20 million workers in all the state-owned enterprises across China (*Beijing Review*, Vol.31, No.51, 1988, p.18). This situation has brought competition into the labour market.

The competitive situation in the present labour market inevitably had its impact on the job opportunities of unemployed girls who graduated from either general junior or senior secondary school and failed the examination for technical or vocational senior secondary school or for higher education.

Apart from the increased competition in the labour market, women also suffer the consequences of the traditional patriarchal ideology. This has generated the notion that female workers are not efficient in comparison with male workers. This image of women workers is prevailing and widely accepted in Chinese society today since it has never been officially challenged in China. Therefore, enterprises have a clear tendency to hire young men in making their selections among the unemployed youth. All these factors have prevented unemployed girls from getting a job in the labour market since the last decade and contributed to the 70% of the unemployed young people who are girls (*Women of China*, 1986.11). This phenomenon has provoked a general concern in society and prompted my research interest.

The research started with the attempt to see if receiving technical or vocational training at training centres makes it easier for unemployed girls to have a job. To what extent can training help unemployed girls to get jobs in the competitive labour market? What was the position of the unemployed girls in the training centres, what kind of training courses do they usually take and why? To get answers to the above questions, a first-hand survey was conducted in three technical and vocational training centres in Beijing. Such a research can only be of an explorative nature. There is only limited literature related to this topic in China. The paper was written largely on the basis of the survey.

As mentioned above, the survey was conducted in three technical and vocational training centres in Beijing, namely: Haidian, Dongcheng and Zhanlanlu. Each of them has its own characteristics in the organization of training. The Haidian training centre is located in the area of famous universities

and research institutions. This training centre is characterized by its variety of training forms and the high quality of its teachers. Dongcheng is characterized by its big size, in fact it is one of the largest training centres in the country. It specializes in training for the services sector, since it is in the area of a commercial district full of big hotels and big department stores. The Zhanlanlu training centre has won its reputation by means of its flexible organization and quality. Besides the above differences, the three training centres still differ in aspects such as management, organization and methods. It is difficult to say which one is better or best since this kind of technical and vocational training has not yet been systematized and is still rather new.

The survey was completed on the basis of both structured and open interviews and questionnaires. Among some 2000 trainees from the three selected training centres, 350 were asked to fill in the questionnaires independently. Owing to different reasons (for example, they lost or forgot to submit questionnaires) the returned questionnaires are 286, which is a response of 81.7% . The 286 respondents concern 25 training groups and 11 specialities. Special attention has been paid to the sex percentage of the respondents in order to make a comparative study: 148 of the respondents were female and 138 male. 173 of them (60.5%) were aged between 17-22 and all in the pre-employment training. 113 of them (39.5%) are over 22 years old. Among them 100 attended on-the-job training and 13 of them took pre-employment training.

2. BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING CENTRES.

2.1. *Background.*

The technical and vocational training centre is a new scheme started after the Chinese economic reforms. Specifically speaking, it has no more than seven years of history. It is still in its early stage of development.

With the intensified of economic reforms and the industrial boom many problems have been openly exposed. The main problem is that the low quality of the labour force can hardly fit the demands of social and economic developments in China. Some imported up-to-date machines and equipment fail to operate properly and grave industrial accidents occur frequently. The low quality of the labour force is considered to be at the roots of the low quality of Chinese products, the high consumption of energy and materials and the poor economic results (UNESCO 1987, p.32). This situation has firmly caught the attention of society as a whole and of the leaders at the government level.

It is a well-recognized fact that China has a shortage of well-trained skilled workers and an abundance of unskilled workers. The government has clearly realized that China has a great need for millions of middle-level technicians as well as skilled workers. Without them, it is impossible to realize China's goal of four modernizations by the end of this century.

Therefore, the Chinese government has focused its endeavour to develop technical and vocational education and training both at intermediate and preliminary levels through formal and non-formal channels. (The details on formal technical and vocational education at intermediate level have been discussed in my paper 'Girls' Participation in Technical and Vocational Education in China', 1988:12. The focus of this paper is on non-formal technical and vocational training).

In order to develop non-formal technical and vocational education and to raise the quality of the new labour force, it is far from enough merely to depend on formal channels, because nearly 60 percent of those people who annually get new jobs in urban areas are without any professional training (*China Daily*, March 31, 1989). Therefore, the Chinese government has formulated a new policy, i.e. 'training before employment' to reform the previous employment systems. The training here mainly refers to primary training. This means that the former practice of employing unskilled workers will be gradually replaced by the new method of employing trained workers in China and new employees should, in principle, be preliminarily trained in their future field of work, acquiring a command of the basic skills and some basic theories.

In response to the new employment policy, the Ministry of Labour has demanded the labour service companies at local levels to organize different kinds of training for unemployed young people, so as to ensure the professional quality of the potential labour force. As a result, hundreds of technical and vocational centres have come into being one after another under the administration of the local labour departments since the 1980s, which has, in fact, given a big push to the increase of the labour force employment qualifications.

2.2. *The Development of the Training in Courses and Training Centres.*

The discussion in the previous section has well indicated that the establishment of training centres derives from the need for social and economic development in China. Therefore, although technical and vocational training has a very short history, it has developed fast in size, form and quality. About 1,600 training centres have been set up in cities and towns (*China Daily*, 1989 No.3, p.31). Some are subsidized by the central or local government and some training centres are independent. Many thousands of trainees have graduated from training centres. Some trainees had to pay their training fees themselves and some were paid by the enterprises that were going to employ them. The practice of this kind of training has really contributed to the effectuation of employment reforms as well as economic reforms.

In addition to its main function of providing pre-employment training, the training centres have developed their function on the basis of the experience they accumulated in practice. In order to develop their due role in the labour market, various forms of long and short-term technical and vocational training courses have been set up. They comprise general pre-employment training, pre-employment training for the special demands of some enterprises, and on-the-job training. Some of these courses focus more on theory and some of them put their emphasis on practice. Most of these training courses are developed on the basis of job openings in such fields as blue-print reading, industrial accounting, estimating for civil engineering, which are badly needed in the labour market. Some are developed to meet self-employment needs, such as sewing and radio maintenance.

Apart from the development in size and form, the training centres have paid attention to their training quality. Quality is considered to be vital for the training centre. Therefore, in training centres more efforts have been made to ensure the quality of teachers, for which reason teachers with a university education and some work experience are highly preferred. To further improve the quality of the training, trainees have the opportunity to combine theory and practice so as to guarantee a good command of both theory and skill in their work fields. Some training centres even invite external experts from the area to examine the trainees and award certifcates and qualifications.

The ZhanLanLu training centre may serve as an example. To ensure its training quality and make the training courses suitable for both unemployed young people and the labour market, the training centre has not only focused its efforts on the quality of teachers and courses but it also pays much attention to employment information. It has organized consulting services on employment for the unemployed young people and their parents. Meanwhile, it also tries to collect employment information from society. Only in the summer of 1984, the staff members of this training centre have visited 56 enterprises and sent over 700 official letters to different enterprises in Beijing for employment information. With this information they can adjust their training courses to meet the needs of the labour market and the unemployed young people. Therefore the training in this centre does not only produce qualified trainees, but also meets the needs of enterprises. The training centre has worked as a bridge between unemployed young people and the labour market, for which it has received due credit.

The situation in the other two training centres surveyed is more or less the same. For to different reasons, there are still some aspects that need improvement, some courses need to be set up and some

need to be cancelled. In the service courses in DongCheng, for example, the trainees hope to receive training in computer application, elementary spoken English and dialects of large minority groups, instead of courses on writing and make-up. But on the whole, these training centres have tried hard to meet the needs and interests of unemployed young people, for which they have won general recognition. Table 1 and table 2 indicate the successful operation of training centres. In the questionnaires, the trainees were asked to what degree they thought the training courses in their training centres were useful. Their response to this question are shown in table 1.

TABLE 1

To what degree do you think the training course is useful?					
	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know	Total
Male	41 29.7%	76 55.1%	4 2.9%	17 12.3%	138 100%
Female	38 25.7%	92 62.2%	2 1.3%	16 10.8%	148 100%
Total	79	168	6	33	286

Table 1 one shows that 86.3% of the trainees are satisfied with the training courses they are taking. Apart from this, the training courses have also aroused the interest of 80.4% of trainees. Table 2 shows the details.

TABLE 2

To what extent are you interested in the training course?						
	not interested	Not very interested	Don't care	Interested	Very interested	Total
Male	3 2.2%	14 10.2%	13 9.4%	78 56.5%	30 21.7%	138 100%
Female	2 1.4%	15 10.1%	9 6.1%	91 61.4%	31 21.%	148 100%
Total	5	29	22	169	61	286

In addition to the above, it is felt that the families of the trainees thought that the training in the training centre was necessary or very necessary. See table 3 for the details.

TABLE 3

What does your family think of your training courses at the training centre?					
	Not necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Don't care	Total
Male	4 3%	62 44.9%	50 36.2%	22 15.9%	138 100%
Female	0 0%	65 43.9%	60 40.5%	23 15.6%	148 100%
Total	4	127	110	45	286

The above data reveal a general picture of the development of training at training centres, indicating that the training courses offered in the training centres are by and large, welcomed in society. In addition to the families of the trainees, trainings at the training centres are also favourably received by employers. For example, the Head Office of Insurance Company in China is very satisfied with the work of the two trainees from the ZhanLanLu training centre. Therefore, the leaders of the company decided to offer them an opportunity for further study and asked for more trainees from this centre in the following year. Another example: one of the trainees in the same training centre was assigned to a Performance Company. With his acquired skill he can cook for a party of 160 people by himself, so the managers of the company are very happy with him. They decided to offer places for the trainees in that training centre to practice. According to some employers, the work at the training centres is meaningful and important.(Sorce: ZhanLanLu training centre April,1987) Therefore, the practice of this kind of training is of vital importance in China, because the training centres can not only provide the labour market with skilled employees, but also help unemployed youth to find jobs. Both society and the unemployed youth have actually benefited from the training at the training centres.

3. THE PARTICIPATION OF UNEMPLOYED GIRLS IN THE TRAINING CENTRES.

On the one hand, the reforms in China's employment system have, to some extent, increased its productivity and made its employees more efficient. On the other hand, these reforms have contributed to a great labour surplus and more competition in the labour market today. This situation has largely influenced the positior of women in the labour market.[1] Unemployed girls make up 70 percent of total number of unemployed young people, which has raised the attention of the related departments in the government and the concern of the All-China Women's Federation.

It is widely recognized that, in China, girls do not enjoy equal access to the labour market. They have more difficulties in getting jobs compared to boys, sometimes even with the same educational background. It was reported that in one district in the Jiangsu province, the labour bureau posted a notice in 1984 announcing that a total of 351 new workers would be received for several enterprises, including the Chemical Fiber Industry and the Postal and Telegraph Bureau. The notice further specified that 269 of the recruits would be male and 82 female, even though almost twice as many women as men had entered for the job examination. One of the most extreme cases occurred in Tianjin, where at the end of 1984 it was stipulated that 97 percent of the total number of new workers recruited would be men. (Emily Honing & Gail Hershatter 1988).

In order to find out how unemployed young people feel about the employment situation in the labour market today, the trainees in the survey were asked if it is possible for girls and boys to get jobs easily without training. They responded as shown in tables 4 and 5.

TABLE 4

Do you think boys can get a job easily without training?					
	Yes	Possibly	No	Don't know	Total
Male	38 27.5%	55 39.9%	27 19.6%	18 13%	138 100%
Female	33 22.3%	63 42.6%	20 13.5%	32 21.6%	148 100%
Total	71	118	47	50	286

TABLE 5

Do you think boys can get a job easily without training?					
	Yes	Possibly	No	Don't know	Total
Male	15 15.9%	47 34.9%	31 22.5%	38 13%	138 100%
Female	6 4.1%	49 34.6%	51 34.5%	42 21.6%	148 100%
Total	28	96	82	80	286

The above two tables indicate the difference in the assessed degree for girls and boys to get jobs in

1 For details on women's position in the labour market before the economic reforms, see paper Employment and Access to On-the-job Training of Chinese Women Workers.(Kan Feng Min).

the labour market. About 67% of the male trainees think boys can possibly get a job without training and 65% of the female trainees hold the same opinion. As for girls, 50% of male and 37% of female trainees thought it is possible for girls to get a job without training. From the above, we could deduce that the possible percentage for boys is higher with both male and female trainees. While for girls, the percentage with male trainees is higher than that with female trainees. This answer indicates that unemployed girls know their opportunities in the labour market very well . Considering the limited employment opportunities for girls at the national level, we find this is mainly due to the current situation in the labour market, where women workers are generally considered inefficient workers. As a result, women workers comprise 63%-80% of the total of eliminated workers, and girls with the same educational level as boys contribute to 70% of the job-seekers. To overcome this situation is not easy. The best way is to offer them the skill training opportunities which can contribute to their employment possibilities in the labour market.

The discussion in section 2 indicates that the training centres were set up to teach the unemployed people skills, to improve the labour quality of new workers and to step up the social and economic development of the country. They are expected to be a successful bridge between the unemployed young people and the labour market, especially for unemployed girls. Since it is accepted that training is the only possible way to help unemployed girls in finding jobs, the questions are what is the access of unemployed girls to the training centre, and what is their position in the training centre, what problems do they have and what are the causes of the problems? The following pages will be devoted to these questions.

In principle, the training centres now are open to the whole Chinese society. Anyone who wants to take a training course can apply for it. According to the interviews and responses to the questionnaires, there is no apparent competition in enrolment since training centres do not guarantee jobs officially. Whenever there are more people applying than can be catered for, the centres will select trainees by means of examinations, which are different. Some are organized by the training centres and some by the enterprises who are going to employ the trainees. Generally speaking, the training centres do not set specific quota for unemployed girls or boys. There is, in principle, no difference according to sex in the enrolment policy. However, in practice there appears to be sex differentiation. For example, if training centres set up training courses for specific enterprises, the training centre has to enrol their trainees according to the demands of the enterprises, which implies sex discrimination. They usually give higher quota to boys. There is an evident access difference to the training courses between unemployed boys and girls.

The results of my survey clearly show the difference of access to the training centres between boys and girls. As was mentioned in section 1, 286 respondents returned their questionnaires. They are from 25 training groups. The total number of the 25 training groups is 1079 trainees; 562 of them are female, 517 are male. Among the 286 trainees in the survey 186 are unemployed young people, 77 (41%) are male and 109 (59%) are female. From the above numbers one could not detect the difference in access to the training centres between unemployed boys and girls. But if one bears in mind the fact that 70% of the unemployed young people are female, then it is not difficult to see the differences in access to the training centres. The percentage of the total of unemployed young people gaining access to training centres is as follows:

a	41%	59%
b	30%	70%

Notes: a---percentage of trainees at the training centres in the survey
b---percentage of unemployed young people at the national level

The total percentage of the unemployed young people is about 2.21. The percentage of unemployed boys is around 62%, of girls 38%. This shows that a significant difference exists in the access to pre-employment training between unemployed girls and boys.

Having determined the rate of access of unemployed girls to the training centres, we must have a look at the position of the unemployed girls in the training centres.Table 6 gives the answers to the questions.

TABLE 6

Distribution of unemployed girls in different courses.

Name of training course	Male	Female	Total number
Industry accounting	4 14.8%	23 85.2%	27
Commercial accounting	4 14.3%	24 85.7%	28
Radio maintenance	20 83.3%	4 16.7%	24
Lift maintenance	26 90 %	3 10 %	29
Electricity	34 85 %	6 15 %	40
Blue-print reading	21 84 %	4 16 %	25
Estimating for civil engineering	25 100 %	0 0 %	25
Shop assistants	55 46.2%	64 53.8%	119
Sewing	3 12.5%	21 87.5%	24
Nursery	0 0 %	30 100 %	30

Source: Haidian, Dongcheng and Zhanlanlu training centres 1989

From this table, it is evident that girls have access to different training courses, but the distribution of girl trainees is not even. The number of girl trainees is large in the stereotyped courses such as sewing, nursery and accounting, while it is small in the training courses like blue-print reading, radio maintenance and estimating for civil engineering, which are considered to require more technical skills. As a matter of fact, girl trainees have not really been involved in the broad categories of training courses. Except for the entry of small numbers of them into training courses providing high technical skills, the majority of girl trainees are still largely clustered in the courses related to women's traditional roles.

Therefore, girl trainees by and large have received women's conventional skills and knowledge mostly linked to women's maternal and domestic roles and preparing them for traditional women's jobs. The question is why. Do they take these courses of their own free will, because of family pressure, or for other reasons?

The factors contributing to the present position of unemployed girls at the training centres are different, but largely linked to society and the influence of traditional ideology. In the survey about 172 (60.1%) trainees decided to enter for the training courses completely by themselves. 78 (27.2%) of them only took little consideration of their family's opinions. Only 36 (12.6%) of them were greatly influenced by their families or forced by their families. All these data seem to show respondents do ot base their decisions on family pressure and therefore family pressure cannot be considered as the

main cause of the present position of unemployed girls at the training centres. However, in China people at the age of 18 have already internalized the demands and rules which they have learnt within the family. What they have learned in the context of the family naturally reflects the ideology and demands of society since anyone in a family lives or works in the society, in which the patriarchal ideology is deeply rooted and prevailing at any level. Therefore, the focus of the analysis is on the factors arising in society. Since it is not possible to cover the analysis of all factors concerned here, three of them are selected. They can be considered as main ones, judging by the interviews and questionnaires in the survey.

3.1. *The Influence of Traditional Ideology.*

Although it has been forty years since China's liberation, the traditional patriarchal ideology has an incredibly strong hold in Chinese society. It runs through every area of Chinese society. The different images of male and female are taught in the early education. Examining the textbooks from volume one to volume twelve in primary schools, one discovers that the differences between male and female roles are clear-cut. For example, in the textbooks men are usually portrayed as leaders, managers, enterpreneurs etc., while women are generally depicted as mothers, housewives, teachers, shop assistants, doctors, etc. (*Women of China*, Vol.4, 1989, p.4). On the one hand, women are encouraged to be good mothers and wives, on the other hand and at the same time they are expected to actively participate in the labour market. This is contradictory. How can one manage two responsibilities as well as he who has shouldered only one? This is why women are said to be less capable than men.

The way girls are raised and educated makes them feel insecure and inferior in the labour market when competing with boys. This creates the problem that girls generally dare not compete with boys in the labour market, especially within specific sectors which normally are alleged to require male qualities and are associated with images about the role of men in society. This reinforce[5] the notion that girls are not as capable as boys.

The survey clearly reveals this sense of inferiority among girls. When the trainees in the survey were asked which sex they thought would study better, 62.3% of male trainees thought boys studied better than girls while 61.4% thought girls did better than boys in the training courses. Following this question, the trainees were asked to give one of the reasons why they thought boys or girls might study better in the training centres. The responses to this question suggest how the traditional ideology works among the young generation. See tables 7 and 8.

TABLE 7

The reasons why boys do better than girls at training centres

	Diligence	intelligence	interest	Other reasons	Total
Male	11 8%	61 44.2%	37 26.8%	11 8%	120 87%
Female	14 9.5%	66 44.5%	18 12.2%	18 12.2%	116 78%
Total	25	127	55	29	236

Total respondents did not answer this question. Boys: 18 (13%)
Girls: 32 (21.6%)

TABLE 8

The reasons why boys do better than girls at training centres

	Diligence	intelligence	interest	Other reasons	Total
Male	51 37%	5 3.6%	10 7.2%	9 6.5%	75 54.3%
Female	74 50%	5 3.3%	16 10.8%	6 4.1%	101 68.2%
Total	125	10	26	15	176

Note: 110 (38.5%) of the respondents did not answer this question. Boys:47 (31.8%)
Girls: 63 (45.7%)

These two tables clearly indicate the different images of boys and girls. Girls are generally considered to be less intelligent than boys. Surprisingly, the responses of the trainees to the question "Why do you think boys do better than girls?" are not much different between the male and female trainees. Only in column three 26.8% of male of trainees thought they studied better because they were interested in the courses while only 12.2% of the female trainees held the same view. This can be explained away by the fact that boys have greater occasion to be interested in their studies. But if one looks at the answers to the question "Why do you think girls do better than boys?" the significant difference lies in the first column. 37% of male respondents thought that studying harder was the main reason why girls do better at training centres, while 50% of female respondents have the same view, which is in fact 13% more than the percentage of boys thought.

This phenomenon can be partly explained by years of gender education and the strong influence of the traditional patriarchal ideology. According to this traditional ideology, 'men are superior to women'; which also indicates men are more capable than women. Therefore, it is not suprising at all to be told time and again that boys are generally more clever than girls. One hears it in families and schools, even in universities. Some teachers believe that boys do well in their study owing to intelligence while girls due to their diligence. Such comments on the capacities of boys and girls are socially accepted in Chinese society. (There must be other reasons which are not available here because of the limitation of the research). The responses of the trainees reveal that notions about capacities of boys and girls have a deep influence among the young generation.

Due to the patriarchal ideology boys are provided with sex superiority in the labour market directly and in training centres indirectly, which also has a strong influence on the position of girls in the training centres. In the survey the trainees were why girls find it hard to get jobs, and why boys get jobs easily. The answers to these questions are shown in the tables 9 and 10 below.

TABLE 9

What do you think is the main reason for boys to get jobs easily?						
	Good health	High efficiency	Sex superiority	Patriarchal ideology	Other reasons	Total
Male	27 19.5%	44 31.9%	39 28.3%	21 15.2%	7 5.1%	138 100%
Female	47 31.7%	11 7.4%	31 21%	49 33.1%	10 6.8%	148 100%
Total	74	55	70	70	17	286

TABLE 10

What do you think is the main reason why girls find it hard to get jobs?						
	Poor health	Low efficiency	Sex role	Patriarchal ideology	Other reasons	Total
Male	20 14.5%	32 23.2%	39 28.3%	42 30.4%	5 3.6%	138 100%
Female	29 19.5%	8 5.4%	41 27.7%	62 42%	8 5.4%	148 100%
Total	49	40	80	104	13	286

This table also demonstrates clearly that the majority of male and female trainees thought that sex and patriarchal ideology contribute to the difficulties for girls to get a job. The significance of the responses is in the questions about boys. In order to facilitate a comparison the answers to question 9 can be arranged as follows:

ANSWERS FROM GIRLS:		ANSWERS FROM BOYS:	
Patriarchal ideology	33.1%	High efficiency	31.9%
Good health	31.7%	Sex Superiority	28.3%
Sex superiority	21 %	Good health	19.5%
High efficiency	7.4%	Patriarchal ideology	15.2%
Other reasons	6.8%	Other reasons	5.1%

When we compare the two tables we find a significant difference of views in the columns on high efficiency or low efficiency. To track the causes why boys think they are efficient and girls not will need further research, the implicit and explicit propaganda in the present Chinese mass-media suggesting that men are more efficient than women should also be considered, beside the early gender education and the influence of traditional ideology. Although differences exist in the answers to the above questions, there is no doubt that sex roles and patriarchal ideology is one of the key factors influencing the unemployed girls' position in the training centres, since 58.7% male respondents and 69.7% female respondents hold the same view on them.

3.2. *Job Possibilities in the Labour Market*

In the introduction to this paper it was mentioned that the reforms in the employment system in China have given enterprises more power to decide about their own business. To increase their profits, to overcome inefficiency and to tap the true potential of their labour force, enterprises started to reduce their employees. With the redundant employees and new job-seekers the labour market has become more competitive and job opportunities for unemployed girls decreased. This serious situation has caused unemployed girls to feel insecure about their economic position. They do not know if or when they can get a job, especially this category of unemployed girls who are only graduates from secondary school without any further training.

In the survey, the trainees were asked how easily they thought unemployed boys and girls could get a job without training. Their responses are presented in tables 11 and 12.

TABLE 11

Do you think boys can get a job easily without training?					
	Yes	Possibly	No	Not sure	Total
Male	38 27.5%	55 39.9%	27 19.6%	18 13%	138 100%
Female	33 22.3%	63 42.6%	20 13.5%	32 21.6%	148 100%
Total	71	118	47	50	286

TABLE 12

Do you think girls can get a job easily without training?					
	Yes	Possibly	No	Not sure	Total
Male	22 15.9%	47 34.1%	31 22.5%	38 27.5%	138 100%
Female	6 4.1%	49 33.1%	51 34.4%	42 28.4%	148 100%
Total	28	96	82	80	286

The responses of boys and girls to the question in table 11 are not greatly different except in the column "not sure". But looking closely at table 12, one finds two phenomena; one is that the percentage of female trainees in the first and second columns is relatively low compared with male trainees in table 11. The other is that both male and female trainees have their lowest score in the positive answer for girls in table 12 which reflects the low score for the negative answer for boys in table 11. This situation can be explained by the actual situation of men and women in the tight labour market and the obvious and accepted preference for men in the labour market today.

3.3. *The Situation of Employed Women in the Labour Market and its influence on unemployed girls.*

As is known, China has a very high level of paid employment of women compared with other countries. According to recent statistics, 98% of the women in the active population (excluding those who pursue higher education) have worked outside the home. However, the nature of employed women's experiences in the labour market has not been satisfactory, especially in recent years. The employed women have not been in the mainstream of the labour force, they are largely concentrated in the subsidiary service occupations requiring low skill and yielding low pay in the labour market. Particularly since the employment reforms enterprises are eager to increase their profits. As a result, more and more women are driven to the subsidiary posts, some even have to wait for a re-assignment. The passive position of women workers has naturally affected the unemployed girls in their choices of training courses both directly and indirectly.

Since unemployed girls had had to wait for jobs and noticed that they have little opportunity and security in entering occupations other than those traditionally considered suitable for women, they

understandably choose training courses which will prepare them for work in the areas related to women's traditional roles.

Therefore, the present occupational stratification between men and women in the labour market can be considered to have a great impact on the restriction of unemployed girls' training choices.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

As section 2 indicated, China is in urgent need of technical and vocational workers. Technical and vocational training centres have been established to meet the demands of the economic development and the structural reforms of the labour force. Naturally, they have received more attention in society since developing technical and vocational education has become more important in China.

Principally this kind of training centre is expected to be an efficient bridge between unemployed youth and the labour market. This kind of training is considered as a short-cut to training new skilled workers as it is more closely linked to the economic development. On the one hand, the training centres offer to the unemployed youth the opportunities to learn technical and vocational skills, which in turn can help them to get jobs in the present competitive labour market. On the other hand, the training centres provide the labour market with skilled young workers. Both enterprises and unemployed youth can benefit from this kind of technical and vocational training, which will step up economic development of China.

The objective of the training centres, has worked out in practice in the present Chinese labour market. The training offered in the training centres has provided unemployed youth with access to a wider variety of employment. According to incomplete statistics from the training centres in the survey, after finishing the course around 80% of the trainees have found jobs in the specialities they were trained for. Enterprises, as mentioned in section 2.2, are satisfied with the work performance of the trainees.

ZhanLanLu may again serve as an example. The training centre was established in 1983. In the years 1983 to 1987 it has started 68 technical courses. 1937 unemployed young people have studied at this centre. More than 70% of them have worked in the jobs they were trained for and over 90% of the employed trainees have become the backbone of their work units, in terms of skills and technology. The situation in the other two training centres, Haidian and Dongchen, is even better: more than 90% of their male and female trainees have been able to find jobs in their training areas.

The above facts demonstrate that training really helps unemployed youth to find jobs in the present tight labour market, no matter whether they are male or female. The pre-employment training courses are warmly welcomed by the enterprises in China.

To find out how the trainees at the training centres feel about the relationship between training and job opportunities, the trainees were asked during the survey if they thought the training they were receiving could help them to find jobs in the labour market. 195 trainees (68.1%) thought the training could be helpful, 21 (7.3%) were of the opposite opinion. 70 of them (24.5%) were not sure. Following this question, they were asked in how far they thought the training could help them in finding jobs. Their answers varied, as table 13 shows.

TABLE 13

To what extent can training help you to find jobs?					
	A little	Much	Sufficiently	Don't know	Total
Male	20 14.5%	49 35.5%	40 29%	29 21%	138 100%
Female	44 29.7%	44 29.7%	42 28.4%	18 12.2%	148 100%
Total	64	93	82	47	286

From table 13 one can see that although a big difference in column one exists, 29.7% female trainees, twice as many as male trainees, think that training can only help a bit in finding a job, which is not difficult to be understood because training is not the sole answer to girls' problems in finding employment. The majority of the trainees think that training at the training centres can help them to find jobs much or very much. Some trainees even thought that the training could make it possible for them to get an ideal job in the tight labour market today, to be deduced from their responses to the question whether the training courses they were receiving could help them to find an ideal job (table 14).

TABLE 14

Can the training course help you to find your ideal job?				
	Possible	Not possible	Don't know	Total
Male	85 61.6%	39 28.3%	14 10.1%	138 100%
Female	97 65.6%	36 24.3%	15 10.1%	148 100%
Total	182	75	29	286

Table 13 and 14 prove that the majority of the trainees have considered that there is a positive relation between their job opportunities and training.

As to the unemployed girls, this training is more than a means to help them find a job in the tight labour market, but it also enhances their confidence about keeping their socio-economic independence.

5. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have discussed the background, development of training centres, the participation and problems of unemployed girls in training centres in particular, and the relation between technical and vocational training and employment. The whole discussion has been conducted on the basis of a survey. In the discussion, problems of girls' access and position in training centres have been clearly exposed. The analysis of the exposed problems has mainly been made based on ideological as well as social factors. Although the survey is in an early stage, its preliminary findings have shed light on three important points:

1. The training centres have been duly developed to meet the needs of the social and economic development of China. They have played an active role in increasing the labour force since their establishment. The expected positive role of technical and vocational training has worked out in practice. The training offered by the training centres can help job-seekers in finding jobs easily in the present tight labour market.
2. Unemployed girls gain access to different kinds of training courses. The information deriving from the interviews with the leaders of training centres and the responses of the trainees indicate that trainees, both male and female, can easily find jobs after training at the centres. However, the unemployed girls' participation in the training centres is not very satisfactory in terms of quantity and quality. Girls have not enjoyed the rate of access to the training that they should, and they tend to cluster in the training courses leading to women's traditional jobs, which are charaterized by low skill and social prestige.
3. The existence of a patriarchal ideology about men's and women's roles in society, the prevailing images of 'male' and 'female', and the passive position of employed women workers in the labour market, among other factors, have largely contributed to the selective choice girls make for specific courses which are associated with women's roles. These factors also contributed to the relatively low intake of women in training courses compared to the rate of their unemployment. This clearly indicates that sex-segregation in paid employment has increased and is more obvious than before the economic reforms in China. Therefore, more access to training will definitely help trainees to get jobs easily, especially girl trainees, but there is no relation to the changes in the occupational segregation between men and women.

The factors contributing to this situation are various and complicated. They concern the social ideology, the present employment situation, reforms in the employment system, etc. To change this situation will require greater efforts than the training centres alone can make. It calls for the concern and cooperation of different levels of society. Hopefully the preliminary findings of the survey will cause recognition of the problems, arouse a greater concern in society, especially on the government level and act as an incitement to further research.

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